1:Gutierrez de Pineda ... E-5 (1947) 1950 SC13 Goajiro SC13

Commissary of La Guajira

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This map was made using that of Major Alberto Lara Samps in the Diccionario Geográfico ... de la Guajira /Geographical Dictionary of La Guajira/

[facing p. 22]

(1) Introduction

[31] La Guajira Peninsula is situated between 12°-28'-30" and 10°-56' north latitude and 1°-11' and 3° east longitude, taking as a base the meridian of Bogotá. It occupies the northeastern part of Colombia and the most northernmost part of the South American continent. Its boundaries can be defined as follows: on the north and west the Caribbean Sea, on the east Lake Maracaibo, and on the south the department of Magdalena and the neighboring republic of Venezuela. In other words, the Caribbean Sea, Lake Maracaibo, the Río Hacha, and the arroyo Paraguaichón serve as natural boundaries. Part of this peninsula belongs to the republic of Colombia and part, the smaller area, to Venezuela.

[33] Its general geological formation appears to be due to the elevation of marine strata, since fossils of sea fauna are found in the subsoil. Its soil is composed of clay, sand, and calcareous strata on the plains, the higher parts belonging to a more ancient formation composed of volcanic rocks, crystalline slate, granite, [35] marble, and jasper, covered by layers of limestone. The predominating minerals are: gypsum, carbonate of lime, argonite, mica, iron ores, and some outcroppings of lignite which have not been exploited up to the present time.

[33] La Guajira proper, as a natural geographical region, starts in the west with the last spurs of the Montes de Oca, a continuation of the Cordillera Oriental in Colombia which crosses the Sierra de Perijá and Serranía de los Motilones, mountains whose beneficial influence is felt in the zones of Carraipía and Paraguaichón. But the characteristic relief starts in the southwestern neck and is composed of isolated ridges of mountains whose general orientation is northwest-southeast, running from west to east and known by the names of Cojoro, Jarara, and Macuira. The last has the [35] highest altitude in La Guajira, 887 meters above sea level, according to Ernst (1), and runs out between Iguaipolo and Parajimaní on the

[115]

eastern coast of the peninsula.

1. Cited by Pichón in Geografía de la Península Guajira [Geography of La Guajira Peninsula].

[2 cont.]

133 The greater part of the coast of La Guajira, which measures in all some 350 kilometers, belongs to Colombia. It starts from the Río Hacha in the west and extends to Lake Maracaibo in the east. It may be divided into two general parts, one low and liable to flooding, the other highland rising sheer from the coast. The low part starts from Pajaina Channel, which flows into Lake Maracaibo in front of San Carlos Island and continues approximately to the port of Cojoro. From there onward the land rises from the sea in the form of cliffs roughly to the level of Castilletes, a point where the coast level descends slightly to rise again near Punta Espada due to the eastern spurs from the Sierra de Macuira, which, as we have noted in previous paragraphs, then lose themselves in the sea. From this point, going always toward the west, the coast is rocky and inaccessible because of its continental structure.

[195 347] In the far western part of the La Guajira coast we find the most important saltworks that are being exploited in the country, such as those of Pájaro, Manaure, and Bahía Honda which supply salt to the major part of the coastal departments and even to those in the interior of the republic. The coast of this part has numerous beautiful and deep bays among which Bahía Honda is outstanding. Along the coast rich fishing grounds are found, such as Bahía Honda, Cabo de la Vela, Carrín, and Carrizal, centers of fishing and pearl exploitation. Unfortunately, it has not been found practicable to make use of all the commercial navigation and fishing possibilities of this coast due to the absence of potable water in the vicinity. This we were well able to appreciate when we found that the water required for drinking in Carrizal and San José de Bahía Honda, during our stay in these regions, was transported distances greater than ten kilometers.

[346] [348]

364 504 The most important ports of the coast of La Guajira, from west to east, are Alpayama; Manaure, center of the salt industry; Carrín and Carrizal, pearl fishing centers; San José de Bahía Honda, on the bay of the same name, also engaged in the salt industry, and Puerto Estrella, center of the maritime traffic of motorized sailing boats plying between the islands of Aruba and Curaçao, and Puerto López.

132 133 [3] La Guajira is a semidesert region, a condition to which four essential factors contribute, in our opinion: 1) the presence of sandy soil which absorbs the water of the small arroyos which flow from the mountain ridges; 2) the constant trade winds which blow strongly from the northeast over the peninsula and tend to temper the climate somewhat; 3) the lack of any real relief with elevations of importance which could act as a barrier to the clouds laden with moisture which are blown by the force of the winds toward the interior regions of the continent; 4) the high atmospheric temperatures which reach 42°C. in the shade at noon and are only slightly tempered by the trade winds and sea breezes.

These factors largely determine the hydrography of the peninsula in which, it may be said, there are only two permanent rivers, the Río Hacha, which forms the boundary with the neighboring department of Magdalena, and the arroyo Paraguichón, which marks the boundary with the republic of Venezuela. Beyond this the region is subject to the seasonal cycle of rainfall, which divides itself into a completely dry summer season with only rare light showers in what might be called spring (approximately in April) and a winter season with violent rains. This last season covers approximately the months of September to December/January, while the first, with the exception of the occasional rains in spring already mentioned, covers the remaining months of the year.

133 134 [134] All these facts convert the peninsula during the summer season into a true desert without vegetation, with the earth covered with loose sand, particles of which are blown into the air by the prevailing winds, causing considerable trouble to travelers and even giving rise to eye infections among the natives. But in winter, when the abundant and copious rains have fallen, the soil, which in parts is below sea level, becomes so flooded that at times all land communications are totally obstructed even on improved [herradura] roads; the dry beds of currents of water are converted into true arroyos, water holes into ponds, and everything is an immense sea of fresh water.

133 132 One must also take into account the presence of some few lakes, such as Guaraguarao, near Maranamana; Soledad, 20 kilometers south of Pájaro; Carazía, approximately 30 kilometers west of Ríohacha; Sarapa, near Puerto López; and Cuisa,

[3 cont.]
●133 adjacent to the hamlet of Roble; also one must consider the
312 water holes, shallow depressions in the ground which store rain water for some time and are utilized as watering places for livestock. Besides these sources of water, [4] the Guajiro digs wells [casimbas] in the dry beds of arroyos, generally, having to excavate to depths of 30 vara at times to reach the underground water.
[653] Windmills, which the Water Department of the Ministry of National Economy has been constructing for some years past, have helped to solve the water problem as have at a few dams, such as those in Ipanarú and Garrapatamana.

137 The factors which we have been describing determine vegetation in La Guajira, which is mainly comprised of thorny creepers, small thickets, cactus, thorn trees, and some wooded areas, especially in the mountain ridges and their spurs, where one finds an abundance of divi-divi, the totumo, indigo, the carañó, [a resinous gum tree], guayacan, the cedar, oak, cherry, and olive, the last two being fruit trees. On the banks of the coves and bays the mangrove grows abundantly.

During the rainy season in the peninsula, the sandy soil is covered with grass and brambles and briars and the woods [montes] become green again, giving a splendid background of color to the whole countryside, but in the summer season all the trees lose their foliage and look like burned logs; the smaller plants disappear, leaving the surface bare to the mercies of the burning sand and showing as characteristic patches the tall cacti with arms raised like great candelabra. The only different shades of color are provided by the olive trees, which never dry out and always show their fresh green foliage and darker fruit, and by some small oases of vegetation on the shores of ponds and water holes.

221 For this same reason the economy of La Guajira and the people's life in general swings like a great pendulum between two extremes — summer and winter. Their principal activity, stock grazing, requires rainfall to maintain pasture and to provide water in the water holes and wells. Agriculture, their other occupation, requires sufficient humidity for the germination of the seed and for maintaining the life of the plants. Winter in La Guajira means good living, abundance, satisfaction. Summer,

[112 cont.]

787 825 Another bird of bad augury is the red owl. If a person who is traveling by night along the road sees one and hears its hoot, this is a signal that a misfortune is about to happen at the spot the walker met the bird or that something will happen to upset him on the road.

If at nightfall the long-drawn out song of the waimpirai is heard, it is an indication that there will be a war between two important clans, or extended families. They say in La Guajira that on a certain occasion, after this omen had occurred, a struggle between two families broke out and 20 members of the Uriyú clan had to take refuge in the convent of Nazaret, defeated by their adversaries who were hunting them down wishing to kill them.

When a hen cackles at daybreak there will surely be a death in the house, particularly when the cackling is repeated on three consecutive days.

312 132 183 Natural phenomena in magic. The most important natural phenomenon for the Guajiro is rain, the essential fount for his agriculture and stock grazing and the basis of his present-day economic organization. It is not strange that this is so because if for every community and for living beings in general water is an indispensable element and if many of the divinities and spirits of the primitive Americans center around it, for the Guajiro it is infinitely more essential if we take into consideration the geographical milieu in which he lives and to which we have referred, perhaps insistently, in this work as we consider it of vital importance (cf. "Introduction"). In the whole area there is no river or stream of importance. The soil has a maximum permeability and has to withstand high temperatures; [113] and as the Guajiro have no practical knowledge of the conservation and distribution of rain water, they always live dependent on the winter season for sowing their crops. For this reason many acts of magic have this end in view, but as 789 this aspect will be better understood in the chapter on "Mareiwa and Wanurú," or notions of good and evil, we will confine ourselves in this section to noting some magic acts related to rainfall and to other natural phenomena.

789 The intervention of the shaman, which we have lost sight of since the second chapter when we described at length 756 his personality and attributes, returns again to participate in

4: Petrullo E-5 (1935) 1937
SC13 Goajiro SC13

121 the field of law is 'coterminous with that of organized legal sanctions.' If there are no 'legal sanctions,' obligations are considered as matters of custom and conventions. He further suggests the use of 'public delicts' and 'private delicts' to classify violations of law which in our society would fall into the criminal and civil classes respectively.[3] Malinowski, justly calling attention to the fact that the field of law does not limit itself to prohibitions but also enjoins duties, extends the term to include binding obligations governing the intercourse of daily life and enforced by a 'specific mechanism inherent in the structure of society.'[4]

While it is not within the scope of this paper to examine critically the various concepts of what constitutes law, we may well ask if its existence in primitive society is dependent upon what one accepts as its definition. We are given the choice of admitting either that certain societies do not know law, or that law is present in all societies in the form of reciprocal obligations which include many phases of behavior which we are accustomed to call either custom or moral obligation. Still it may be granted that in any society there occur breaches of custom, which are recognized as trespass on the recognized rights of the individual and perhaps on the entire community, for the composition and rectification of which there are known and accepted acts whose nature is set and limited by precedent. These are in contrast to those breaches which may bring on the offender only social reprobation in a mild form through giving him a 'bad name.' The former ought to fall within the province of law as generally understood in our society, while the latter may properly be included in the field of morals.

105 Before proceeding with a description of Guajiro concepts of law and of custom it may be well to outline briefly the structure of their society. It is estimated that there are between ten and [61] twenty thousand Guajiro inhabiting the peninsula that takes its name from them. Though most of the territory belongs to Colombia and a narrow coastal strip is within Venezuelan borders, the Guajiro live almost independently of both [133] governments. The land is arid, lacking running water except in the hills of Macuire, where there are some springs. Most of

5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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172 these tombs are all made from cornelian, jasper, or other reddish variation of silica, and the stone, according to the Indians, is not to be found in the Goajira. While ascending Macuira, several places were pointed out to me, especially near the top, in which I was entreated to look for treasure "of the Arhuacos." They themselves, although coveting tombs above everything, are, curiously enough, afraid to look for them, not hesitating, [171] however, to appropriate any found by chance. This, combined with the fear of mentioning their dead, points to some sort of religion or belief in a superior Being. They evidently took possession by conquest, 174 driving the weaker "Arhuacos" out, and have managed to assert their rights to this day. It is rather an historical anomaly that such a small [161] tribe, which probably never exceeded 80,000, should have been able to preserve intact their absolute freedom, their manners and customs uncontaminated, in spite of the accessibility of their territory, surrounded as it is by the sea, and the continual commerce that has been going on for centuries.

● 183 Commencing with the topography of the country, the mountain system attracts attention most—more so, as a remarkable error has been propagated, that the Goajira is one large fertile plain with only one or two isolated hills. At least one-half of the country is hilly. There are in fact two Goajiras; one known as the Lower Goajira is the broad level plain extending from the river Ranchería to a little beyond the Tota. The other, or Upper, Goajira is the hilly sterile region between the Tota and Punta Espada. The Upper Goajira is simply a volcanic eruption, a conglomeration of low hills, conspicuous from the many cone-shaped forms, and the parallel ridges in which they have been thrown up. These parallel lines run chiefly north-west by north-east, and are separated by two large plains, thus forming three distinct groups of hills running from sea to sea. The first and most important of the three is the easterly or Macuira range. This fine, bold, interesting mountain mass rises in front of Chimare, about 12 miles from the sea-shore, and terminates at the most easterly point of the Goajira, forming the rocky headland known as the Punta Espada (Jarida). Due to its elevation and position, it serves as a species of cloud-trap detaining the lower clouds that drive in from seawards impelled by the easterly or trade winds, that blow here with great force most part of the year. This is the only spot in all the Goajira that can really be called fertile. I ascended the two highest points. The north or Macuira proper lies in front of Punta Estrella, and is composed of several peaks ranging between 2000 and 2200 feet above sea-level. 153 241 Some of them offer any difficulty in climbing, as the slopes are covered [187] with gardens to within 500 feet of the top. The vegetation is similar to that of the Sierra Nevada, at 6000 feet, and the temperature was very low, showing at midday 62° Fahr. The highest point at the southern extremity in front of Punta Espada is 1600 feet. Owing to the low dense

5: Simons K.-S (ca. 1882) 1885
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Guah I could only reach 1700 feet, the limit of the Indian gardens, where plantains, maguey, onions, corn, sugar-cane, &c., were growing: also a rivulet with running water. The ground about here is well cultivated, supplying most of the Goajiro with grain food. Many small low ranges of hillocks dedicated to agriculture live here; they are all poor, as agriculture is not considered wealth among the Indians.

The second or central range, which for want of a better name I shall call Perashi Hills, are entirely separated from the Manaira range by a plain some nine miles broad. This plain gradually rising from both ends, reaches 500 feet towards the centre. These hills rise at Bahia Honda almost from the margin of the bay, and stretch as a narrow belt right across the peninsula. Formed of ridges of low hills seldom exceeding 1500 feet, covered with a scanty wood of brasiletto, divi-divi, cacti, and other prickly bushes, interested by valleys, one mass of prickly pear, they present a desolate forlorn appearance two-thirds of the year, yielding, however, during the short rainy season abundant pasture. In this range, as with the former, there are two prominent peaks. The northerly one, a conspicuous object from Portete and Bahia Honda, is called Bruna. I ascended it with much difficulty, and found the height to be 1050 feet. Sierra Ipapa, marked on some maps, is probably Bruna.

Some 15 miles south of Bruna, Goajorapa rises well out of its surroundings. This, the highest point of the range, does not exceed 2300 feet, and must be the Cerro Azules of the Spaniards, supposed to be the highest peak in the Goajira, but it is seen that Manaira dominates it by at least 600 feet. A portion of this range is also called Cerros de Juliarcos from a resemblance at the foot of Goajorapa. Between the highest peaks and towards the south is the extensive plain of Ahuipa. We now come to the third or Cojoro range, separated by a rather tortuous valley, varying much in breadth, about six miles at the narrowest place. These hills are more extensive than either of the two first, and show many peculiarities, being flanked on all sides by numerous isolated hills-like ridges, some running parallel to each other with broad valleys between, while others are complete segments of circles. Towards the Manaure shore are several large mountain masses. The highest, Tarijalea, is a wonderful mass of igneous rock some 2000 feet in height. Close by, another mountain, Arijuna, plays a prominent part in the landscape. All these hills, like Perashi, are destitute of vegetation, many so steep that the bare rock and stone-slides put all idea of growth out of the question, and with their weird shapes, immense boulders, and caves, form a fitting retreat to the Cocinas or Rubber Indians. The celebrated Tete Goajira may be considered as belonging to this range, for although entirely isolated and some nine miles distant, it is intimately attached by two small separate hills. The Tete is certainly one of the most beautiful sights in the Goajira, and

S: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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on a clear day can be seen from any point in it. On the west side a small hill attached spoils its beauty, seen from seawards, otherwise it is perfectly symmetrical in form. The Indians call it Jepita. It lies in the Cardon district, and is the most dangerous portion of the Goajira. To visit it, I had to persuade Martin, one of the great chiefs, to accompany me with his three sons, uncles, nephews, &c. We started at daybreak, and were all day, and arrived in time to see the sunset from the top. We only saw three Indians the whole day, yet Martin assured me that all our movements were watched, and pointed out to me two probable places where an ambuscade would be planned for our return. We returned by a different road, getting back at 4 A.M. tired, hungry, and thirsty. I found the height to be 1200 feet above sea-level, or 900 feet above the plain. The rock is composed chiefly of trachyte with large crystals of felspar, similar to those of the Drachenfels on the Rhine. To also belonging to this group may be considered the two isolated hills rising in front of Cardon de los Remedios and Carrizal, close to the north spur of the Cojoro range, called Jallare. They are both insignificant and do not exceed 400 feet in height. The Cerros de Carpintero, a small group of hills behind the Cabo de la Vela, are of more importance, they are about 700 feet above sea-level. From Cabo de la Vela to Punta Estrella, between the hills and the sea, are innumerable cliffs and banks rising to 200 feet, usually with very abrupt edges, and covered with rolled stones.

Rivers properly speaking there are none in the Goajira. The country is cut up in all directions by shallow, dry, sandy beds of watercourses, that during the rainy season carry off the water as fast as it falls. Not even the Macuira Hills are able to send a flowing stream to the sea during the summer, which here lasts at least eight months. It will have been remarked that the Indians have no collective name for their mountains, each little projecting point rejoicing in its own name. With their rivers it is still worse, for not only every water-hole adds a new title to a river—and these are innumerable, the custom being to dig for water in the sand of the watercourses, and as these wells dry up others are dug farther up streams—but every path that crosses the watercourse has its name. Even any prominent rock or large tree is enough to add to the interminable list of river nomenclature. On the plains below the Teta the drainage is effected by numerous small streams winding about in a most bewildering manner, and although perfectly dry, they usually have pools of muddy water at the bends. As the plain is little above sea-level, the water has cut deep zigzag channels, very different from the shallow sandy beds of the hills. The water remaining dammed up, instead of gravitating to the sea, causes the great fertility of the plains.

The principal source of water for the Indians are wells. These are of two kinds; first, the most common, by digging, usually in the dry

5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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bed of a watercourse. As the season advances, and the water recedes, they either dig after it or search for a lower level. Wells of 30 to 40 feet are very common. The water is reached by a staircase cut in the sand with an easy incline. Wells are easily distinguishable from a distance by the water-troughs, hollowed out of divi-divi trees, and called canoes. These are of the most distorted and grotesque shapes, and serve to water the herd. This is very hard work for the poor Indians during the summer months, and usually employs the whole day. Water from wells if taken early in the morning is always clear and cool. When bathing at a well the Indian uses a canoe; if he stops to drink, a bath invariably follows. Every well has a name, and the country is perforated by them like a mining camp. The wells of Chimare are phenomenal; dug out on the sea-shore, on a narrow strip of sand 100 yards in breadth, with the sea on one side and the salt-pans of Chimare, with layers of salt many feet thick, on the other, the water is, notwithstanding, perfectly fresh. There are seven holes about 10 feet deep. I may mention that Pairahi is the name of a celebrated well dug in the river that drains the eastern flank of Hosna. It means "salt," probably because the water is brackish.

Second in importance are the water-tanks or cuisinas. These are sometimes natural, as a small lake at the foot of Hosna and the cuisinas of Cojua, filtrations from the river Nalua, forming a large lake in the rainy season and many small dirty pools in summer, but nature aided by art is the rule. Some are immense undertakings, and large sheets of water, calculated to last a summer through if not too severe; such as Ariapé, the cuisina of Puerto Estrella, a large crescent-shaped piece of water of about a quarter of a square mile. The water of these cuisinas is always muddy and filthy for drinking purposes. The herds are driven in, and every Indian that passes is sure to bathe, so that in time almost a skin of grease forms on the top; and yet in places where they are it is the only water to be had, truly meat and drink combined.

The Goajira coast abounds in harbours and bays, but none of much importance. Between Rio Hacha and Cabo de la Vela, in the extensive bay formed by the latter, anchorage is found almost all along the coast. Numerous rendezvous have become known through the commerce with the Indians, and quite a large trade is carried on in the small coasting schooners. Further along the coast are three large bays. The first, or Portete, is a large bay, well protected from the easterly trades, and is certainly the best port along the coast. Unfortunately the entrance is narrow, intricate, and with shoals. The next, Bahia Honda, is almost a complete oval, some eight miles long by three miles broad, and with an entrance of nearly three miles broad. It is separated from the sea by a stone wall from 60 to 80 feet at the highest, but not enough to prevent the bay from the strong easterly winds that blow with such force here. It makes but a poor harbour, the surf inside during the afternoons pre-

5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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133 504 venting anything being landed dry. The Colombian Government erected a guard-house at the entrance of this bay last year, but I am afraid it will have to be abandoned as untenable. Puerto Estrella makes a very bad port, the small trading schooners having to lie in under the breakers. This is the last recognized Colombian port, at least pending the arbitration question. The next good port is the Laguna de Tocuyas, in the Gulf of Maracaybo. This place is much frequented by Venezuelans, and a trade has sprung up that if not checked will ruin the already decaying commerce of Rio Hacha. The last port on the coast is that of Uijoro, and spoken of as the future port of Maracaybo, with which it would have to be connected by rail, an engineering feat of not much difficulty. The *ensenada* or bay of Calaboso has an inaccessible, heavy, surf-beaten coast.

614 The peninsula is inhabited by only one tribe of Indians. These are subdivided into many families or castes, bearing much analogy to the ancient "clans" of Scotland. Each caste or rather family circle is united against all comers, taking up the quarrel of any one of its members to make it general. The Goajiros are strictly conservative and aristocratic 556 in their ideas, wealth and interest are omnipotent. A poor man may be [578] insulted with impunity, when the same to a rich man would cause certain bloodshed. They have no veritable rulers, but each community [622] recognizes the wealthiest of its members as the chief or cacique, as he has been dubbed by the Spaniards, and look to him for protection. An Indian born poor, cannot become wealthy and great. Whatever lands he may accumulate, his humble origin would never be forgotten; he [557] could, however, marry into a high caste family, having the means, and his children could become, through their mother's relations, great chiefs. 614 Besides the name, each caste or family represents some animal, and many of the minor castes, over and above their own symbol, adopt another of some more powerful denomination, to enjoy the privilege of a good protector. There are at present, altogether, some thirty odd castes among the Goajiros. Of these I was able to discover the names of twenty-two. The remainder are insignificant, little known castes, chiefly inhabiting the hills. There are about ten of importance, chief among these the "Uriana." This, the largest caste in the Goajiro, has subdivided or split up into many ramifications, such as Uriana tiger, Uriana rabbit, Uriana parakeets (a song bird), Uriana gecko (lizard). This family is at present not only by far the most numerous, but also the richest; due to its connection by marriage with the Pushaines, formerly the wealthiest of the land. The Pushaines are to-day still [558] great holders of terrene and ornamenta, but with the Indian, only cattle, mules, and horses are real estate. The Urianas on receiving the terrene, sold out for cattle. The second in numbers are the Epinayus, as a rule they are poor. Under their protection are the Siamanas, again under these the small caste of the Guargualyuas. A full list will be given

S: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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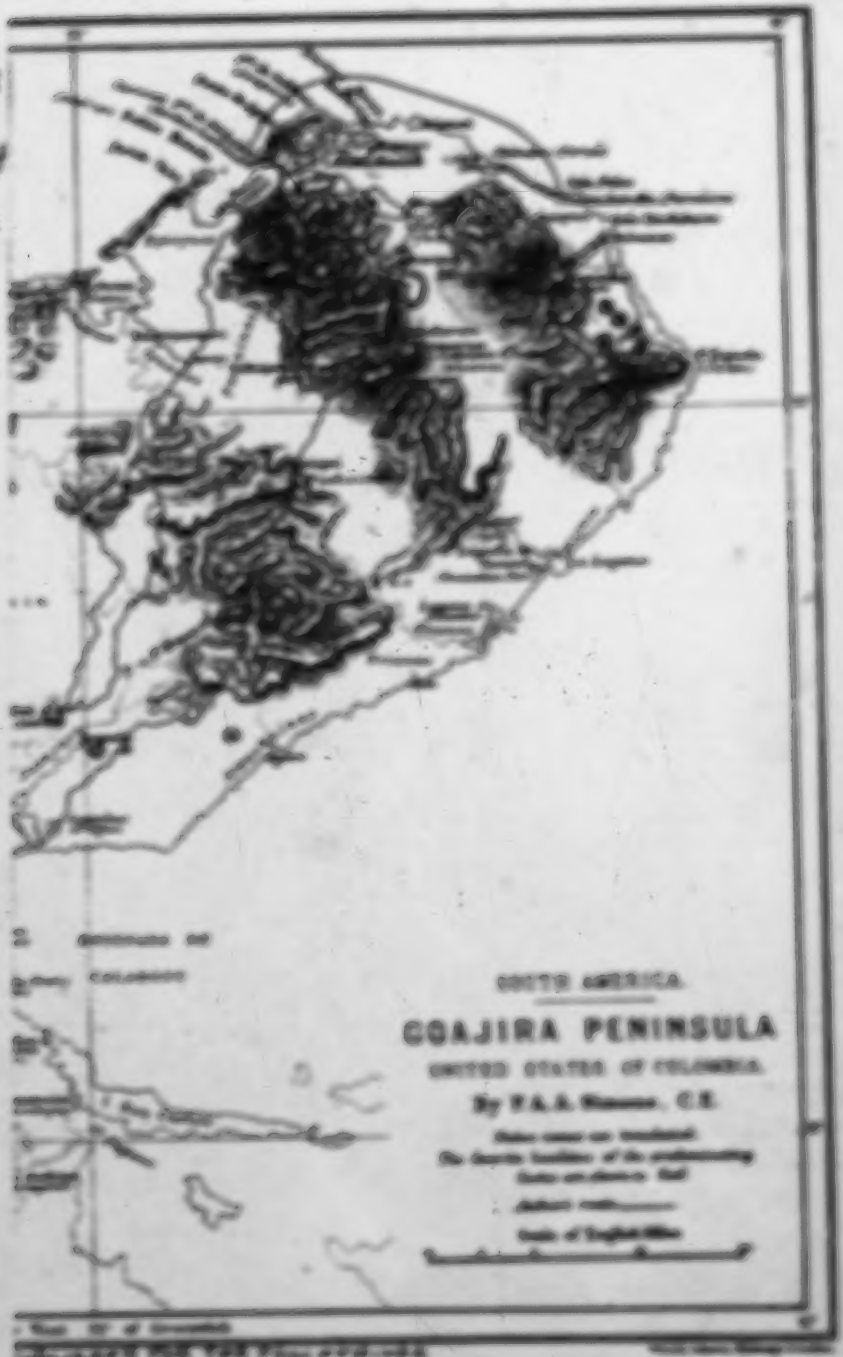

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6: Santa Cruz E-5 (1940) 1941
SC13 Guajiro SC13

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ASPECTS OF THE AVUNCULATE IN THE GUAJIRO CULTURE

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THE Guajira peninsula is situated in the northwest corner of Colombia, South America, roughly between the 71° and 73° W. long., and 11° and 12° N. lat. It is rather flat in contour with only some hill ranges in the eastern part. Rainfall is scarce and the vegetation is of a semi-arid type. The region is inhabited by one tribe of Indians, the Arawak-speaking Guajiro. Both culturally and linguistically the Guajira peninsula presents a uniform block.

The present writer visited the territory in the summer of 1940, but due to illness contracted there was forced to cut short his visit. Fairly full data were gathered on all phases of social culture. The present paper deals with certain aspects of one phase only, the avunculate.

The role of the maternal uncle is manifold in Guajiro culture, as organized as the Guajiro are into maternal clans. Types of behavior, both prescribed and unformalized, vary, depending on the seniority of both uncle and nephew, but as on that of sister. In this paper we shall be concerned for the most part with the prescribed and voluntary relations between the eldest brother of a given woman and her eldest son, and between this eldest brother and his sisters' daughters. Other relations not involving these specified kin will be touched upon only incidentally for illustrative purposes.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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in a wide woman's tunic, dyed black with divi-divi. Her face was painted black, too. At her age that could scarcely have been necessary to save her complexion, but such painting is also a protection against dangerous spirits. The Gaffer carried his ceremonial dress with him, tucked away somewhere. This consisted of an oblong piece of cloth sewn up along one side and with a hole for the head at the top. It is worn draped in such a way that the chest is bare.

Thus our caravan made its way along. The animals' shadows contracted further and further. Soon the sun would be right overhead. The very air seemed to have melted in the heat, and the blue hills in the distance had begun to dissolve. Here and there grew a cactus, otherwise there was nothing but sand and salt to be seen. Slowly the caravan crept along. We spurred our mules and rode on ahead, but after a while we had to turn back in order not to go astray. We found the Gaffer riding and the Gammer walking. The Gaffer could hardly stick on. He swayed in the saddle, for he was as drunk as a lord, having smuggled with him a calabash containing spirits instead of water.

He was just about to take another pull as we came galloping up, and he was so frightened that he dropped the calabash, which smashed and the spirits ran out. At that we searched the old couple's baggage, despite their protests, and found another calabash of spirits. We gave the Gaffer a large coin for it. The two young ones were delighted at his misfortune, for his baggage had given them a lot of trouble. It was obvious that the Gaffer had started drinking early, for the loads on the donkeys in his charge were badly secured and danced about, so that one after the other had to be lashed on afresh.

We told the Gammer that she must restrain her old man, an order which the interpreter undoubtedly passed on, probably with some comments of his own. The Gammer was not popular with the two young ones, and Bristles would not lack the courage to tell a woman a few home truths. Gradually the Gaffer sobered up, and a good thing he did, for we were approaching an Indian rancho, where he would have to act as spokesman for me.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

hopnig for a taste of the kid. The Indians always share what they have.

When nothing remained of the kid but some well-gnawed bones, a wrinkled old man with a straggling beard approached. He looked famished and we gave him a couple of hooves, which he split and sucked at, while our men cracked the bones for themselves. The newcomer had to have tobacco too, so I gave him a cigar and a box of matches. He turned the matches this way and that in amazement, obviously never having seen such a thing before. He handed it back to me and I showed him how to strike a match, at which he gave a great jump. I had to light my own cigar before he dared let me put the match to his.

Then a group of Indians on horseback came galloping up. Just as they reached us a gust of wind bowled the tent over and a flying tent peg struck my wife on the mouth making it bleed. The newcomers were all young, unarmed men. They dismounted, flocked round my wife, examined her mouth rather roughly, but with the best intentions, bewailing the accident. They then tore Gladrvet's hat off his head and handed it to my wife as suitable compensation for the damage, appearing to be delighted with their judgment. I distributed tobacco and they and the thin old man gobbled up the water in which the kid had been cooked and which our Indians had somehow left in the pot. The young men then rode off, laughing gaily.

Our men did not seem to approve of their visit. They wanted us to move on again at once, as if they thought the young men were spies, so our little caravan moved off, leaving the wrinkled old man sitting there, smiling a wan old man's smile.

We travelled on across hillocks covered with dry scrub. The ground was strewn with bleached bones. Then we came to sparse divi-divi woods, and towards evening we saw ahead of us a wide savanna covered with sparse short grass, on which thin cows, bony horses and woolly sheep were grazing, and in the background rose the shadowy silhouette of hills. These, we felt, must be the Macuira Hills; and the Indians we met confirmed that they were.

?:Bollinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

●[35] We had gone round Sierra Chimare to the north. Understandably enough, since it was the monks' name, nobody seemed to have heard of Nazaret, but they did not react to Amaburu either.

Macuira is quite a large complex of hills, and if the Indians were going to be unable to help us, it might prove quite difficult to find the mission station. Suddenly a man came up on a horse. He was wearing trousers. He was so [36] astonished to see us that he nearly tumbled off and his horse became restive. We told him who we were and where we were going, and his face lit up.

'Let us camp together,' he suggested. 'I have a camp under a tree that is large enough for you as well. I have a herd of goats that I am driving home.'

We went with the man, who was a mestizo—and had two Indian wives, who helped my wife make goat stew.

[5/6] In Goajira you can sleep in the open perfectly well during most of the year, but it is more pleasant to lie under a tree. The mestizo was able to tell us exactly how to get to Nazaret.

[37] We broke camp at daybreak, before the sun had begun to send its shafts through the sparse leaves of the tree. We three whites started off at a good pace, and soon the mestizo with his goats and our own pack animals had dropped behind. Before long we came in among hillocks sparsely clad with divi-divi and other bushes and trees that did not mind drought. This sort of vegetation the Indians call a wood. The hours passed; the sun was unmercifully hot, as it always was. Our tongues were stuck to our gums by thirst, and a persistent breeze filled our ears with sand. We did not mind, however, for paradise was not far away.

The trees were all withered and leafless. Then we came [38] to valleys filled with white sand, that in places formed terraces. The mules' hooves sank in deep. I realized why we came across sand so far from the sea: all that part of the hills had sunk into the sea during the quaternary period, and had then risen again carrying the sand with it.

Then a hill like a sugar-loaf emerged. That was Irabire, [39] about which we had been told, and we knew that we were

?:Bollinder T-5 (1926, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goujire SC13

not far from the mission station. Indeer means 'sweet corn' and it does look like a dark golden brown giant corn-cob. Suddenly we were in a valley that was all green. We had to rub our eyes. Not only grass grew there, but tall trees with fresh green leaves. The crown of coconut palms waved high above them. We saw bananas, maize, and all sorts of fruit trees. What a miracle! The cause of it was a little stream that had water in it almost all the year round, though it petered out in sand on its way to the sea. We enjoyed the greenery, the smells and the bird song, and watched the multi-coloured butterflies. The valley was not inhabited; it was a field. After that we came to more white sand, where everything was just as arid as before.

Nazaret lay in the middle of this sea of sand. Ahead of us we saw some whitewashed buildings with grass roofs and one larger building with a tower. A monk came walking briskly to greet us, his white beard waving in the breeze. This was Father Salvador, whom we knew from a trip we had made further south five years before. He had then been stationed at the foot of the Andes and his flowing beard had been brown. How old he had grown! The desert seemed to have aged him by twenty years at least, we thought. Then the other monks emerged and friendly nuns took charge of my wife.

We had good, sweet water, decent food and black coffee. The kindly fathers at once set about preparing a whitewashed hut for us. They wanted us to stay for some time, make Nazaret our headquarters, from which we could go to the Indian camps in the surrounding country, which we would then get to know. They would also find us good guides.

Then our Indians arrived with our baggage. We paid them and dismissed them. We could not help laughing when Gaffer Isaiasd that he could be of great use to us as a guide, for he had neither been there before, nor even been able to find his way there. His old wife had taken advantage of our absence to appropriate a number of our things, including an aluminium saucepan. This came to light because her pack looked suspiciously bulky and had to be searched, so her

?:Bolleder T-5 (1928, 1955) 1957
BC13 Coajiro BC13

CHAPTER 5

Slaves and Slave-dealers

We had expected lush green valleys and thus the mission [23]
station lying on its terrace of sand was to some extent a disappointment. There was greenery in the area, as we knew from having passed it on the way, but it was quite far off and one had to wade laboriously through deep sand to reach it.

These green valleys could be called oases. Nazaret, perhaps, was the one relatively peaceful place on the whole peninsula. The Indians respected the monks, who were kindly, understanding, civilized people. Nazaret was a fixed point and the only place where we could set up a headquarters from which to make excursions of varying length; otherwise we would have to travel and keep travelling all the time we were in Guajira. There were supplies of food there and drinking water. They had a rainwater cistern and also a waterhole with clear water that never seemed to run dry. It had cost them a lot of labour and effort to erect the buildings there. All the materials had been brought by pack-donkey from Puerto Estrella, to which it was taken in schooners. Maize, sugar and other such provisions still had to be fetched the same way. They were not always able to get meat from the Indians. Once it was nearly three months before they could replenish their larder. They had great difficulty in preserving things from rats, which were as numerous there as everywhere in tropical South America, to say nothing of other noxious creatures.

The monks and nuns together looked after two hundred [24]
Indian children, and their support was not to be hazarded. [25]
The Capuchins always concentrate on the children, whom

7:Bolinder T-8 (1920, 1933) 1937
SC13 Goajiro SC13

And her eyes shone at the recollection of the now forbidden pleasures of her girlhood.

When I went on trips in the surrounding country I usually had Francisco with me and often my wife. Anita had then to be ready to feed us when we came home, whether it were the same day, or the next, or three days later. In such things Indian women have patience. They know how to wait, and they are never surprised.

We began our exploration of the brown hills and green valleys of Macuira with a long trip on foot. Laboriously we waded through the fine sand. This is almost firm when it is damp, but it was then the dry season and the sand was loose. We were going to visit relatives of Francisco, simple people, but not actually poor. To us who had already had a certain amount to do with Indians, it was a surprise to find ourselves dealing in such categories as 'rich', 'poor', 'well-to-do', etc., just as though we were concerned with white people. Among all other Indians the difference in economic status between individuals had been relatively insignificant, as, presumably, it had been among the Guajiro before they took to herding cattle.

The Indians we were to visit lived in a beautiful place, just on the fringe of a watered valley between purple brown heights, with the peak of Iruhor dominating the landscape. The valley was like a green Bengal fire against its parched background. There were two huts, built of cactus wood and with roofs of the same material. They were saddle-backed and linked by a wall, which acted as a shield against the wind, that there always blows in the same direction. In front of this wall, that is between the two houses, were the fires. Round about were shelves covered with grass and erected on four poles. The Creoles call these *trojas*. You can sit under them and be out of the sun, and cooking utensils and stores can be kept on them out of reach of animals. Here and there were hammocks stretched between poles stuck in the ground, and there were other poles used in the all but daily butchering of a goat or sheep. Round these there were dark patches on the ground.

Having Francisco with us we were naturally well re-

T:Bollinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

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La Tina rising above the cactus scrub

Typical Guajira landscape with dust-devil trees

[Facing p. 88]

?:Bollinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

231 Later that day we reached the coast at Castilletes. It was
232 desert country there, dreary, full of sand-dunes and fur-
[15] rowed with salt water channels. There we came across an emaciated horse, a poor beast that had obviously strayed and was now desperately looking for water and grazing that did not exist. It stopped and drank sea-water. It must have been dying, and the kindest thing would have been to shoot it, but that could have cost us dear. The owner would have demanded unreasonable compensation. Instead, the Indians went to see what clan mark it had, so that they could report to their fellows in Castilletes. News spreads quickly among the Indians. The owner would not have much joy of his horse, for the hide could not be worth much, but he would learn where it was to be found.

Francisco got us to Castilletes easily. He had been there often before, even once on our behalf—to fetch gold, literally, for we were expecting a transfer of money from Caracas and it came in the form of gold, American, Venezuelan and Colombian gold and silver coinage circulated in Goajira, but the Indians would have nothing to do with notes.

694 There was, of course, a certain risk in conveying several hundred gold coins through Goajira from a slave-port like Castilletes, where there were plenty of shady characters. The money, however, was packed in boxes made for photographic plates and the same schooner from Maracaibo brought some packages for the monks, to whom our money was also addressed. The boxes interested neither Caracas nor others. Francisco rode a wretched horse and had dressed in his worst jacket and a pair of indecently ragged trousers, so that he did not look as though he were carrying large sums on him, while his horse would not have tempted any thief. Thus, all had gone well, Francisco had not been nervous, though we had.

697 Castilletes was the only place on the south coast where white people lived and to which whites frequently came. Schooners from Venezuela put in there. The frontier between Colombia and Venezuela ran between the houses, of which there were about a dozen in those days. The sur-

?:Bollaert T-S (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

Indians also had to have some of it. Fortunately, we had plenty of oatmeal, and we got the Indians to eat porridge.

The Indians we met, almost all on foot, were well armed with lots of arrows and often a gun and a well-stuffed cartridge belt besides. Custom required that all we met should be given tobacco, but the Cusina being reputed expert at seizing an outstretched hand and pulling a rider off his horse, we did as the Indian chiefs do and without pulling up threw a cigar to those we met with a gay injunction to catch it.

The shadowy figures that slipped away among the cactus trees when we met them by night were most suspicious. These were not pleasant encounters. Even by moonlight anyone could see that we were three white people, but whether the shadows were Cusina or others with bad consciences we could not tell. Our large packages must have looked desirable to Cusina eyes, but they largely consisted of Indian things, that is to say, our collections. The brigands would have been disappointed if they had opened them!

The hills we now had to the north of us were quite different in character from the gentle Macuira Hills. Tall, menacing masses of stone rose up here and there flanked by razor-sharp ridges. In the naked, grim ravines among them dwelled the Cusina, spying out across the plain from the verges of sheer precipices, like vultures looking for their prey. One evening, we came to another abandoned rancho beside a cuimbe. We had already unsaddled and stacked the packs, when we discovered that the cuimbe was empty. The Indians knew there was another water-hole not far away. The animals had to be watered, so despite the risk involved, we had to split up.

We three white people stayed with the luggage, while the Indians went off with the animals and our water-vessels. My wife had fever and had to lie down, which she did with her little pistol beside her. Gladwyn and I kept watch, rifle in hand. We had piled the luggage on a slight eminence, so that even in the darkness we had a certain view of our surroundings. Meanwhile our men had vanished in thick dividivi scrub, in which anyone but an Indian would have got

?:Bollinder Z-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
BC13 Goajiro BC13

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

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8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
SC13 Goajiro SC13

THE GOAJIRO

By JOHN M. ARMSTRONG AND ALFRED MÉTRAUX

THE REGION

The Goajira Peninsula, projecting as part of Colombia northward into the Caribbean Sea, contains an area of about 5,000 square miles, bordered on the east by the Gulf of Venezuela. The broad level plain known as Lower Goajira occupies the base of the peninsula, while the northern extremity is known as Upper Goajira and is characterized by three distinct ranges of hills. These hills have a maximum height of 2,600 feet (about 780 m.) and are separated from each other by two broad plains which run from sea to sea. The country is dry and infertile, the vegetation consisting of divi-divi, cactus, pricklypear, and other xerophitic plants. Even these are absent where bare rock and stone slides preclude vegetation. Rivers are almost nonexistent, the country being cut in all directions by shallow, dry, sandy water courses which drain off rain as it falls. In the south and west, on the treeless prairies or savannas, the land is more hospitable. Here the Indians do most of their stock raising.

LOCATION AND HISTORY

The pastoral *Goajiro* who inhabit this peninsula (map 6) differ profoundly from the agricultural forest-dwelling *Motilones* and *Arhuaco* to the south. Juan de Castellanos, in his "Elegías de los Varones Ilustres" (1874), is the first to allude to these Indians, though he calls them *Cosina*. He states that in his time, about 1550, cattle were already abundant in the area. It seems that the adoption of pastoral life by the *Goajiro* took place soon after the Spanish settlement of that part of the continent. The name *Goajiro* was, however, already known in the 16th century and was applied first by Pedro Simón (1882–92). The first reliable ethnographic information about the *Goajiro* goes back to José Nicolás de la Rosa (Nicholás, 1901) and Antonio Julián, who both visited these Indians in the 18th century. Jahn (1927, pp. 119–136) has gathered the few data concerning the *Goajiro* which he found in the early literature. A short summary of the first description of these Indians is given by Hernández de Alba (1936, pp. 8–12).